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ABSTRACT

In pursuing the priority of offering all students an equitable and excellent education, the Clinton administration has focused the nation on an urgent imperative: High standards for all students must be set and achieved. This imperative presents a difficult challenge and an enormous opportunity for chronically disadvantaged students, particularly Hispanic students and limited-English-proficient (LEP) students. The strategies in this booklet aim at meeting the unique educational needs of Hispanic and LEP students in the context of high standards and achievement and respond to recommendations proposed by the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, the Hispanic Dropout Project, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus. Following an overview of the educational status of Hispanic and LEP learners, the booklet sets out a plan for educational improvement structured around five goals: (1) maintain and refine programs that boost Hispanic and LEP students' achievement and lower the Hispanic dropout rate; (2) ensure a program of ongoing, empirical data collection and research targeting Hispanic and LEP students' educational needs; (3) build the capacity of teaching professionals; (4) support efforts to increase the Hispanic community's access to higher education and lifelong learning; and (5) create accountability systems to monitor the progress of Hispanic and LEP students. With each goal is an outline of the Department's current improvement efforts and their direct impacts, followed by new initiatives and their projected impacts. A final section lists outreach activities related to the five goals. (SV)

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IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES

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A RESPONSE TO THE HISPANIC DROPOUT PROJECT

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IMPROVING OPPORTUNITIES

Strategies from the Secretary of Education for Hispanic and Limited English Proficient Students

A RESPONSE TO THE HISPANIC DROPOUT PROJECT

February 1998

U.S. Department of Education
Richard W. Riley
Secretary

Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs
Delia Pompa
Director

This publication responds to a publication by the Hispanic Dropout Project titled *No More Excuses: The Final Report of the Hispanic Dropout Project* (February 1998), available from the U.S. Department of Education (see below).

The full text of this public domain publication is available at the Department of Education's home page at **http://www.ed.gov/offices/OBEMLA** and in alternate formats upon request. For more information, please contact us at:

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INTRODUCTION

All students must be equipped to perform the new jobs and roles of an increasingly sophisticated workforce, which means that offering students an equitable and excellent education must become a priority for the nation—our families, schools, communities, businesses, and all of us who are in contact with children. With this priority in mind, President Clinton and Secretary of Education Riley have been focusing the nation on a clear and urgent educational imperative: High standards for all students must be set and achieved. This imperative presents a difficult challenge and an enormous opportunity for the chronically disadvantaged who attend the nation's schools—particularly Hispanic students and Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. The strategies in this booklet aim at meeting the unique educational needs of Hispanic and LEP students in the context of this emphasis on high standards and high achievement.[a]

In making an excellent education a priority, the administration both responded to the consensus of the people and issued a call to action to improve the education of American learners of every age, of every background, and of every community. To ensure the success of all students in becoming educated, we must provide each and every one of them with the chance to achieve to the highest academic standards; we must build upon their individual and collective gifts; and we must recognize and address the challenges they bring to the nation's schools.

The secretary's strategies for improving opportunities for Hispanic and LEP students build upon the significant initiatives undertaken by the administration and others over the past four years to develop education policy specific to this population of students. In February 1994, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12900, creating the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, which advises the president and secretary of education on the educational progress of Hispanic Americans and on ways to increase their opportunities to receive a high-quality education. In September 1995, Secretary Riley created the Hispanic Dropout Project, whose mission was to study the Hispanic dropout problem, to produce concrete analyses and syntheses for a variety of audiences, and to recommend actions that could be taken at all levels to alleviate the problem. Finally, in June 1996 the Congressional Hispanic Caucus proposed a three-point education plan for supporting high achievement among Hispanic and LEP students.

The strategies in this booklet reflect the priority the Department places on the education of Hispanic and LEP students and respond to the recommendations proposed by the President's Advisory Commission, the Hispanic Dropout Project, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

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[a] LEP students are students who were not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English and who come from an environment where a language other than English is dominant. Additionally, these students have sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and those difficulties may deny them the opportunity to learn successfully in English. Hispanic students comprise approximately 73 percent of all LEP students. Hence, both Hispanic and LEP student needs must be addressed together. From *Descriptive Study of Services to Limited English Proficient Students* (1993) by Development Associates, Inc., under contract to USDOCE. #LC1003001.

We set out a substantive plan to refine existing programs and develop new initiatives that address the Department's five goals for Hispanic and LEP students:

Goal One: *Maintain and Refine Programs That Boost Hispanic and LEP Students' Achievement to World-Class Standards and Lower the Hispanic Dropout Rate*

Goal Two: *Ensure a Program of Ongoing, Empirical Data Collection and Research That Targets the Educational Needs of Hispanic and LEP Students*

Goal Three: *Build the Capacity of Teaching Professionals to Meet the Educational Needs of Hispanic and LEP Students*

Goal Four: *Support Efforts to Increase the Hispanic Community's Access to Higher Education and Lifelong Learning*

Goal Five: *Create Accountability Systems to Monitor the Progress of Hispanic and LEP Students*

For each of the goals we provide a concise outline of the Department's current improvement efforts and their direct impact on Hispanic and LEP students and adults nationwide. Next, we lay out the Department's new initiatives that support each goal and their projected impact upon the same population. We conclude by incorporating the five goals into proposed outreach and collaborative efforts designed to ensure the improvement of education for Hispanic and LEP students.

Overview of the Educational Status of Hispanic and LEP Learners

Two descriptors characterize Hispanics in the United States: rapidly growing numbers and a history of educational disadvantage. Over the past 20 years[1], the percentage of public school students who are Hispanic has increased from 6 percent to 14 percent. In some states, such as California, Texas and Florida, Hispanics constitute a majority of public school students in large urban areas. But this increase is not limited to the Southwest. Between the 1990-91 and 1994-95 school years, the number of LEP students nationwide grew substantially. For example, in Arkansas the LEP population grew by 120 percent, in Wisconsin by 42 percent, in Oklahoma by 99 percent, and in Kansas by 118 percent. *Nationwide, over 1,067,744 teachers had at least one LEP student in their class in 1992.*[2]

According to state education agency data[3] for the years between 1990-91 and 1994-95, the number of LEP students mushroomed by nearly 50 percent. LEP students comprise approximately one in four public school students in California, Alaska, and New Mexico, and about one in eight students in Texas and Arizona.

Despite their significant representation, Hispanics and LEP students are among the most educationally disadvantaged of all population groups attending the nation's schools:

- *The Hispanic dropout rate is unacceptably high*: about 20 percent for those who enrolled in a U.S. school and 30 percent counting both those who ever enrolled and those who never enrolled in a U.S. school. Language limitation is one factor associated with the failure to complete high school. A factor contributing to the high dropout *rate* is that while Hispanics in America who were born outside the United States may never have entered schools in this country, they are counted among those who dropped out. Regardless of the reasons behind their lack of high school credentials, the impact is the same—young Hispanic adults do not have the basic level of education necessary to participate in today's economy, which demands high skill levels and the ability to learn new skills fast.[4]

- *Thirty-nine percent of Hispanic children live in families with an income below the poverty line, a rate more than twice as high as for white children.* In general, youth from families in the lowest income brackets are eight times as likely to drop out of school than those from families with a high income.[5]

- *Hispanic children start elementary school with less preschool experience than white children.*[6] According to the President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, less than 15 percent of Hispanic children attend pre-school (compared with 25 percent for black children and 35 percent for white children), despite our knowledge that such programs are proven predictors of educational attainment.[7]

- *Achievement gaps between Hispanics and whites remain high.* At age 9, the gap in reading performance has not changed significantly since the initial assessment.[8] In math and science proficiency, there has been little improvement in the gap between Hispanics and whites over the past 20 years. At age 13, the gap in math proficiency between Hispanics and whites has closed by 10 points; however, the current gap of 25 points still remains.[9] And in reading proficiency, there has been little change in the gap between Hispanics and whites over the past 20 years.[10] At age 17, the proficiency gaps for reading and math have closed by 11.6 and 12 points respectively; however, significant proficiency gaps remain.[11]

- *Academic courses like algebra and geometry in the eighth grade act as gatekeepers in high school to college preparatory courses and, hence, to college admission. Yet, well over 80 percent of Hispanic and other disadvantaged students are not introduced to these courses by the eighth grade.*[12]

- *The demand for teachers qualified to serve LEP students far outstrips the supply.* The state of California, for example, estimates a shortage of nearly 21,000 bilingual or English as a second language teachers.[13]

- *While approximately one-third of U.S. students are classified as minority,*[14] *only 13.5 percent of their teachers have minority status.*[15]

GOAL ONE: Maintain and Refine Programs That Boost Hispanic and LEP Students' Achievement to World-Class Standards and Lower the Hispanic Dropout Rate

Establishing more rigorous and challenging academic standards is at the heart of the U.S. Department of Education's agenda and is its most important initiative aimed at ensuring equal access to education for all students. The nation's most disadvantaged students have borne the brunt of insufficient resources and low academic standards. As a result, little opportunity exists for Hispanic, LEP, and other disadvantaged students to fully learn the basic and advanced skills required for entry into college and high-skilled, high-paying jobs. America's students can never be first in the world in math and science if all of America's students are not focused on high academic standards and helped to achieve them. This is particularly important because Hispanic and other minority workers will comprise larger and larger portions of our workforce as this sector of the population continues to grow.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

Through its elementary and secondary programs, the Department provides assistance to schools that serve millions of Hispanic and LEP learners each year. The Department's current programs take into account the growing numbers of Hispanic and LEP students and respond to their educational needs and those of their families and schools. The programs described below help Hispanic and LEP students simultaneously meet high academic standards, become engaged in school, and become adequately equipped for their eventual roles in the workplace and in contemporary American society.

Title I: Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as reauthorized in 1994 under the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA), is a far-reaching, $7.4 billion (president's FY 1999 budget request: $7.8 billion) program of grants to local education agencies that provides a wide variety of supplementary education services, for example extended learning time and in-classroom support, to help *6.5 million low-income K-12 students* nationwide meet high academic standards.

Direct Impact: In 1994-95, Hispanic students comprised approximately *2.1 million—or 32 percent—of all the students served by Title I,* second only to white, non-Hispanics in program participation.[16] In 1994, at the request of the administration, Congress modified Title I by inserting language to ensure that more LEP students would qualify for its services and be served on the same basis as other students. As a result, Title I's impact on rapidly growing numbers of LEP and Hispanic students is increasingly important.

Bilingual Education: This ESEA program directly addresses the educational needs of rapidly increasing numbers of English language learners in the nation's schools, by aiming at three primary goals:

- helping students learn English and meet high academic standards;
- training teachers to serve limited English proficient students; and
- funding research and data collection on issues and problems related to the continuous improvement of education for LEP students.

Direct Impact: 630,000 Hispanic students—*approximately 72 percent of all LEP students served in the Bilingual Education program*—receive instructional services in this $199 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: $232 million) program.[17]

Immigrant Education: In 1998, $150 million will be awarded to state education agencies through the ESEA Emergency Immigrant Education Program, created in 1984. Grants are to be used to help local education agencies provide high-quality instruction to immigrant children and youth so that they effectively make the transition into American society and meet the same challenging state performance standards all children and youth are expected to meet.

Direct Impact: Over *500,000 Hispanic students*—approximately 60 percent of all immigrant students—receive services provided by the Emergency Immigrant Education Program.[18]

Migrant Education: Migrant Education is a $305 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: $354.7) program under ESEA tailored specifically to the needs of children whose parents' occupations are migratory. Specifically, Migrant Education has three goals:

- improving coordination of identification, recruitment, testing, distance learning technology, and development of assessment instruments among all states to help improve educational outcomes;
- fostering partnerships among state directors, federal agencies, and other organizations to improve coordination of services to migrant families; and
- ensuring that migrant children have access to services that will assist them in overcoming cultural and language barriers, health-related problems, and other challenges that place them at risk of not completing their education.

Direct Impact: According to the Office of Migrant Education, approximately 610,000 migrant students were served by the Migrant Education Program (MEP) in the school year 1993-1994. Eighty percent of the migrant and seasonal farm worker population is Hispanic American.[19]

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): While many Americans are familiar with the services provided by special education programs in the nation's schools, they may be unaware that special education services reach Hispanic students in a variety of ways tailored to their linguistic and cultural education needs—above and beyond their special needs. Grants to states under IDEA are at $3.8 billion in fiscal year 1998. Participation of Hispanic children in the Special Education program varies with the type of disability. For example, compared with non-Hispanic students, Hispanic students have lower rates of identification as mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed. However, they have a higher rate of identification than non-Hispanics under the specific learning disabilities category, which includes half of children with disabilities.[20]

> **Direct Impact:** Hispanic and LEP students and their families who qualify for special education services benefit from parent training projects, numerous bilingual/bicultural direct service projects, and teacher training projects.

The Adult Education Act: The act authorizes the major federal program that supports and promotes literacy instruction and services for educationally disadvantaged adults—reaching beyond the nation's students to serve their families as well. In fiscal year 1998, $361 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: $394 million) is available.

> **Direct Impact:** *Hispanics represent approximately 34 percent of the 3,900,000 adults served* through Adult Basic Education courses. These courses include: Adult Secondary Education, which leads to a high school degree or its equivalent, and English as a Second Language (ESL), which helps adults participate more fully in the American workplace and in society at large. It is a testimony to the need for and the value of the ESL courses when one considers that *67 percent of Hispanics participating in adult education are enrolled in ESL classes.*[21]

Even Start: An ESEA family literacy program, Even Start expands the availability of early childhood services and provides General Educational Development (GED) instruction, job training, and English language instruction to many limited English proficient parents. The Even Start program delivers formula grants to states for the support of intergenerational literacy projects combining early childhood education for children and literacy training for their parents.

> **Direct Impact:** In fiscal year 1998, the $124 million Even Start program (president's FY 1999 budget request: $115 million) will provide an opportunity for strengthening literacy through community and parental support. In 1995, 36 percent of participating parents were Hispanic.

New Initiatives and Projected Impact

Seven of the Department's new and far-reaching initiatives to further the administration's education priorities directly address the educational needs of Hispanic and LEP students and adults.

Reducing Class Size: Too many young children, especially those in low-income and Hispanic neighborhoods, face large class sizes in the early grades when they need more individual attention in small classes. The president has proposed a historic initiative to reduce class size in the first three grades.

> **Direct Impact:** Over seven years, class size will be lowered to an average of 18 students. This will enable children in poor districts to get more individualized help from their teachers.

America Reads: The America Reads initiative's primary goal is to help all children read well and independently by the end of third grade. When implemented, it will include several efforts directly targeted to Hispanic/LEP students and their families.

- **The Read*Write*Now! Campaign:** This campaign combats "summer reading drop-off"—the loss of reading skills through non-use during summer vacation—and encourages continued reading during the year through the use of reading partners for children, active use of libraries, and concerted vocabulary development. English- and Spanish-language reading activity kits for children and their families and caregivers will be available in hard copy from the Department's toll-free number at 1-800-USA-LEARN and will be downloadable from the Department's Web site at **www.ed.gov**.

Modernize Schools: Many Hispanic disadvantaged and low-income children attend schools that are overcrowded and run down in counties that cannot afford to pay to build or renovate the schools.

> **Direct Impact:** More than $20 billion in interest-free bonds will be available to modernize school buildings to make them safer, reduce overcrowding and get up-to-date technology in the classrooms.

Model Effective High Schools: Working with the National Council of La Raza and ASPIRA, the Department of Education's New American High Schools Initiative is helping states focus attention on schools that better prepare all students for college and careers.

> **Direct Impact:** Four of the ten schools initially selected have a Hispanic population of 20 percent or more. In addition, half of the six model urban high schools receiving Department awards have substantial Hispanic student participation.

Charter Schools: Since 1994, the Charter Schools program has been authorized in ESEA to support the design and initial implementation of charter schools and the evaluation of their effects on students, student achievement, staff, and parents. The president's FY 1999 budget request is $100 million.

> **Direct Impact:** Several charter schools that have received Department of Education startup funding meet the specific needs of linguistically and culturally diverse students. The cur-

ricula of these schools promote learning the first language and culture in conjunction with learning a second language and culture.[22]

Mathematics Literacy and Standards: Working with the National Science Foundation and groups such as the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the Department is launching a comprehensive strategy to improve mathematics achievement, with particular attention to the middle school years. The Department's strategies focus on equipping teachers to teach challenging mathematics content, assisting states and school districts in selecting and implementing high-quality curricula and technologies, and increasing public understanding of the importance of high standards in mathematics.

Direct Impact: This drive to improve mathematics teaching and learning will ensure that all students have better odds of developing the mathematical skills and knowledge base they need to succeed in the 21st century. The Department and National Science Foundation activities will place special emphasis on high-poverty schools, which will reach high numbers of Hispanic and LEP students. Materials designed for parents and students will take into account the needs of second language learners and be made available in Spanish.

Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education: The Eisenhower National Clearinghouse for Mathematics and Science Education was established in 1992 at the Ohio State University. The Clearinghouse is the national repository for K-12 mathematics and science instructional materials. It also has an online searchable database of those materials, including those in Spanish and English, as well as online and direct resources for professional development supporting math and science education improvement. The president's FY 1999 budget request is $335 million.

Direct Impact: The Clearinghouse provides, in Spanish and English, a broad range of instructional materials, software, and videos for classroom use.

GOAL TWO: Ensure a Program of Ongoing, Empirical Data Collection and Research That Targets the Educational Needs of Hispanic and LEP Students

Empirical research relevant to the real problems schools and students confront—particularly the pressing issues related to the large and increasing population of Hispanic and LEP students—is a prerequisite for achieving two of the Department's priorities: raising the level of student achievement and achieving literacy. The Department believes that a program of ongoing, empirical data collection and research targeting the educational needs of Hispanic and LEP students must accomplish the following:

- **Provide Current, Accurate Demographic Data:** As the number of Hispanic and LEP students in the nation's schools continues to grow, there is a critical need for reliable data that will help educators and policy makers intervene strategically and appropriately in behalf of this population.

- **Discover and Disseminate Best Instructional Practices and Facilitative School Structures:** The Department supports a program of research that discovers best instructional practices and facilitative school structures and teaching for Hispanic and LEP youth. When disseminated aggressively, the findings of this research can be used to spur best practices in schools and communities nationwide.

- **Evaluate Ongoing Policies and Programs:** This program of research must serve an evaluative function, assessing the effectiveness of ongoing policies and programs so that they can be refined and improved. As educators assess the needs of Hispanic and LEP students, they must have a clear sense of program and cost effectiveness—as well as specific guidelines and empirically tested action plans that will carry them forward in implementing new programs and practices.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

Ongoing Publications and Dissemination of Relevant Information on Hispanic and LEP Students: The Department provides leadership to researchers through the production of several data sets and related publications, which are the primary source of national-level information on Hispanic and LEP students.

Direct Impact: Two data sets and a time series study are especially key to our knowledge of Hispanic and LEP students: *Dropout Rates in the United States, The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988*, and *The Schools and Staffing Survey*. These studies track and analyze populations of students to better understand factors affecting educational progress

over time. Their ongoing presence on the national scene allows researchers to deal more reliably with issues directly related to improving education for Hispanic and LEP students. The studies also provide a historical context important for developing current and future policy.

Research Centers Funded by the Department: The priority that the Department places on Hispanic and LEP students is highlighted in the research conducted by several national research centers, all funded by the Department. Within the Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) are two research centers, funded through the National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, with a focus on Hispanic and LEP youth. Under the Department's Office of Reform Assistance and Dissemination (ORAD) are three Regional Educational Laboratories with specialty areas in Language and Cultural Diversity.

Direct Impact: The Center for Research on the Education of Students Placed At-Risk, at Johns Hopkins University, is funded at $27,700,000 over 5 years and the National Center for Research on Education, Diversity, and Excellence, at the University of California at Santa Cruz, is funded at $19,965,089 over 5 years. The Northeastern Laboratory at Brown University, the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) in Austin, Texas and the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) in Hawaii are funded at approximately $1,200,000 per year, or $6,000,000 over five years.

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA ensures that Hispanic and LEP students with disabilities will receive better quality and equitable education services through data-driven practices.

Direct Impact: The reauthorization of IDEA requires states to gather data to prove that school districts are not disproportionately identifying and placing in separate educational settings children with disabilities from among minority or limited English proficient backgrounds. These data also must show that such children are not disproportionately suspended or expelled from school.

The Outcomes Center of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services: The center, located at the University of Minnesota, works to improve the assessment of educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. Among its activities are projects that identify, prioritize, and generate solutions to technical and implementation issues in assessing students identified as LEP and disabled. These projects were funded at $250,000 in 1997.

Direct Impact: Through the growing and relevant body of research on issues related to language, diversity, and student achievement produced by these national research centers, other researchers, practitioners, and policy makers will be able to develop informed, strategic, cost-effective ways to address the educational needs of Hispanic and LEP students.

New Initiatives and Projected Impact

Research Sponsored by the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA): In fiscal year 1998, OBEMLA will award nearly $4.5 million in research and information dissemination grants and contracts targeted solely to educational issues that affect Hispanic and LEP students. The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education Web page received a *daily* average of *5,500 requests for information* from practitioners, policy makers, and members of the public during 1996-97—*a total of 1,596,240 hits for that year.*

Direct Impact: These monies will provide funding for focused research and dissemination that will guide the development and delivery of educational services for Hispanic and LEP students.

Standardized Data Collection: In order to refine and improve its program of ongoing data collection relevant to Hispanic and LEP students, the Department will examine data collection needs and propose a standardized process for gathering and sorting data by race, ethnicity, and language background.

Direct Impact: The National Center for Education Statistics will work with OBEMLA and other relevant offices to create a systematic plan for including Hispanic and LEP students in relevant data sets.

Research on Assessment: In light of the proposed national voluntary assessments in mathematics and reading, research on how to appropriately assess Hispanic and LEP students must be paramount on the nation's education agenda. This area of research is highly complex and resource intensive.

Direct Impact: The Department plans to invest approximately $5 million in such research in fiscal year 1998 to address the most urgent questions relevant to assessing Hispanic and LEP students so that they may fully participate in and benefit from the proposed national assessments. The major areas of research will focus on three questions:

- At what point is testing in a second language yielding useful results?
- What accommodations are appropriate when assessing LEP students?
- What role does assessment in the native language play in overall assessment?

GOAL THREE: Build the Capacity of Teaching Professionals to Meet the Educational Needs of Hispanic and LEP Students

The quality of instruction that Hispanic and LEP students receive depends in great part upon having an adequate supply of teachers with the rigorous training needed to meet the educational needs of this fast-growing population of our nation's students. Many school districts that are experiencing this rapid growth of students with diverse needs cannot find sufficient numbers of trained teachers—and instead find themselves in a state of educational crisis, struggling to deliver high-quality services to students whose need is critical. *Approximately 27.2 percent of schools seeking teachers for their LEP students have bilingual/ESL vacancies which are very difficult or impossible to fill.*[23] A 1993 study found that *only 18 percent—or fewer than one in five teachers serving LEP students— were certified in either English as a second language or bilingual education.*[24]

However, the presence of a certified teacher alone will not accomplish the ambitious education goals of the president and the Department. Clearly, Hispanic and LEP students need teachers equipped with new skills and able to teach challenging content in ways that engage students and motivate them to achieve according to world-class standards.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

Teachers and Personnel Programs: Funded under Title VII of ESEA, this program will award $18 million to institutions of higher education and local education agencies that propose activities to increase the availability of improved training for teachers who will work with LEP students. The president's FY 1999 budget request is $22 million.

> **Direct Impact:** As a result of these awards 2,000 teachers will receive certification or graduate degrees in English as a second language or bilingual education. These grants will also increase the availability of professional development activities for mainstream teachers, ensuring that the nation's teachers will be better prepared to address the educational needs of the growing number of LEP students.

Career Ladder Programs: In fiscal year 1998, this Title VII program of ESEA will award $7.3 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: $17.3 million) in grants to institutions of higher education and local education agencies to train paraprofessionals or to recruit secondary school students to become certified teachers of LEP students.

> **Direct Impact:** This is part of a long-range solution focusing on early awareness of the importance of and need for bilingual and ESL teachers in the future. Succinctly put, these resources go into the community, targeting students who potentially are interested in becoming teachers of LEP students.

New Initiatives and Projected Impact

Teacher Recruitment: The president has proposed legislation under Title V of the Higher Education Act that, over a five-year period, would provide $350 million to attract excellent teachers to high-poverty communities by offering scholarships and other support services for those who commit to teach in those communities for three years.

> **Direct Impact:** The proposed legislation contains a special emphasis on recruiting minorities into teaching and a funding priority for applications from Hispanic Serving Institutions. In addition, the legislation provides special consideration for applications from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Tribally Controlled Colleges, further increasing the potential for a more diverse teacher workforce.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: The Department has worked with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards to develop teaching proficiency examinations for teachers of English language learners. In fiscal year 1998, the Department will provide the National Board $16 million to develop the examinations. The National Board will provide a rigorous set of standards based on which teachers must demonstrate their knowledge of content as well as apply appropriate teaching strategies. The content domain for becoming a teacher of LEP students and the varied approaches to teaching in this setting demand different training. Teachers who meet the content and performance standards through the process of the National Board application are acknowledged as superior by their administration.

> **Direct Impact:** School districts will have a new opportunity to identify and reward master teachers to hold them in the teaching profession. This will ensure that a significant percentage of teachers working with LEP students will meet the highest performance standards.

GOAL FOUR: Support Efforts to Increase the Hispanic Community's Access to Higher Education and Lifelong Learning

A basic credential for future success in the workplace and in American society is the ability to expand one's knowledge base. As the workplace increases in technological sophistication, demanding workers with advanced problem-solving abilities, a two- or four-year degree and learning for a lifetime will become even more critical. Hispanic students who do graduate from high school appear to be in a good position to continue their education and acquire the skills they need to succeed in the labor market. The percentage of Hispanic students who had enrolled in college by the Fall immediately following their high school graduation was 51 percent in 1996 versus 65 percent for white students.[25] Furthermore, *Hispanics who achieve a bachelor's degree earn between 63 and 108 percent more than Hispanics who graduate from high school without further education.*

Adult Hispanic and LEP learners may also seek non-degree education opportunities that will further their position in American society. Individuals who do not speak English well may choose to pursue opportunities to learn English and thus improve their marketability in the U.S. workforce. Hispanic and LEP learners also benefit considerably from specialized courses or training to upgrade existing job skills or to learn new skills.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

Pell Grants: Pell Grants are the most effective way to provide access to higher education for low-income students, despite the fact that the grant award amounts have not kept pace with the increase in college costs. For fiscal year 1998, Congress provided a $1.4 billion (24 percent) increase for Pell Grants that supports the administration's proposal to increase the maximum Pell Grant from $2,700 to $3,000 and raises the number of Pell recipients by 220,000. The $300 increase in the Pell maximum award is the largest in two decades. The president's FY 1999 budget request is $7.6 billion, to support a maximum award of $3,100.

> **Direct Impact:** With the Pell Grants increase benefiting about 4 million students, over 40 percent of Hispanic students will receive much-needed support to access higher education with a Pell Grant. In total, 17 percent of Pell recipients are Hispanic.[26]

Additional Student Financial Assistance: Since cost is an important factor influencing students' decisions to attend an institution of higher education, student financial aid is an important tool for providing access. Hispanics receive about 10 percent of total federal student aid, consistent with their enrollment levels in higher education overall.[27]

> **Direct Impact:** Overall, over 40 percent of Hispanic students receive some federal student financial aid.

Strengthening Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) Program: In 1994, about 50 percent of all undergraduate Hispanic students attended the 135 HSIs eligible to participate in the HSI program. This program supports the administration's commitment to capacity building for institutions that provide educational opportunities for large numbers of diverse, needy and underrepresented students. Eligible institutions are required at a minimum to have a total Hispanic student undergraduate full-time equivalent enrollment of 25 percent or more, have a high enrollment of needy students, and have low educational and general expenditures. In fiscal year 1998, the HSI program will be funded at $12 million.

> **Direct Impact:** As the proportion of Hispanics grows in the nation, so will their educational needs. The HSI program is a prime vehicle to assist institutions that serve large numbers of these underrepresented students by providing educational opportunities. The administration has recognized this and has proposed increasing support for this program to adequately address these growing educational needs. With FY 1998 funding of $12 million (president's FY 1999 budget request: $28 million), the HSI program supports 37 Hispanic-serving higher education institutions enrolling about 200,000 students, of which 120,000 are Hispanic.[28]

TRIO Programs: Six programs are identified collectively as the Federal TRIO Programs: Student Support Services, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/Science, Talent Search, Educational Opportunities Centers, and McNair Postbaccalaureate programs. The Federal TRIO Programs are educational outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds throughout their academic careers, from middle school to postbaccalaureate programs. For fiscal year 1998, the TRIO programs were funded at $530 million. The president's FY 1999 budget request is $583 million. In reauthorizing the Higher Education Act (HE), the administration is recommending that priority points be added to applicants proposing TRIO projects in underserved geographic areas. This priority is intended to respond to changing national demographics and may increase the number of Hispanic students served in TRIO programs.

> **Direct Impact:** Findings from a recent national evaluation of Upward Bound show that students who participate in the program expect to complete more schooling, take 17 percent more academic course work, and are more likely to be in a stronger academic curriculum than similar students not participating in the program. More than for any other group participating in Upward Bound, significantly positive results were found for Hispanic students.
>
> The McNair program encourages the educational advancement of low-income, first-generation[b] and minority students by providing effective preparation for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. Research data show that the McNair-eligible population is substantially underrepresented in graduate education; thus, this program responds to a national need to assist disadvantaged and minority students—such as Hispanic students—complete doctoral degrees.

[b] Individuals defined as first generation were born in the 50 states or the District of Columbia and have one or both parents born outside the 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Adult Education: As already stated, the Adult Education Program provides instructional opportunities for obtaining a GED, as well as literacy instruction for adults. The program also supports a major new project entitled "Crossroads Cafe," a distance-learning ESL program broadcast by the Public Broadcasting Station.

Direct Impact: In 1995, 67 percent of all Hispanic Adult Education participants received ESL instruction.[29] This is a testament to the value of as well as the need for these services. More importantly, as programs such as "Crossroads Cafe" are developed and able to be delivered electronically into the home, such instruction will become more accessible. These types of programs and the services they offer, such as infant and day care, will enable many more students to take advantage of educational opportunities.

GOAL FIVE: Create Accountability Systems to Monitor the Progress of Hispanic and LEP Students

Hispanic and LEP students must be included in national, state, and local accountability systems. This has not been the case for many LEP students, who were excluded because of the technical challenges of assessing them. Even when they do include this population of students, many national, state, and local data collections are of little value to schools, students, or parents: Academic achievement assessments of Hispanic and LEP students conducted in English and with no accommodations for language proficiency usually provide testing officials little more than crude estimates of English proficiency and insignificant information about an LEP student's content knowledge and skills in other subjects. Often as a result of this inadequacy, LEP students are excluded from large-scale testing until their English proficiency allows them to participate in the assessment in ways that authentically measure their achievement. However, during the period of exclusion, LEP students may be forgotten or ignored. They may not receive instruction that would equip them to take these necessary tests—and education agencies are not held accountable for the plight or the success of these students.

Current Improvement Efforts and Their Impact

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): The National Assessment of Educational Progress is the longest-running assessment of student academic achievement at the national level. Several studies are underway to provide useful information about Hispanic and LEP student academic achievement. In addition, the Department's Office of Educational Research and Improvement has budgeted nearly one million dollars to pilot a Spanish-language version of the NAEP mathematics assessment in coming years.

> **Direct Impact:** NAEP data, which enable the Department to measure Hispanic student performance over time against a national standard and in comparison to other racial and ethnic groups, provide the basis for analyzing the academic achievement of Hispanic students.

Coordinated Program Review: There is a clear need to provide improved oversight of federal education programs. To address this need, a variety of Department offices—the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBEMLA), the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Office of Vocational and Adult Education, and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services—are conducting coordinated quality reviews.

> **Direct Impact:** These coordinated reviews have an added benefit for Hispanic and LEP student populations, namely, specific interest in and monitoring of Hispanic and LEP participation and integration in federal programs. OBEMLA's participation in this coordinated review process has provided an insightful and much needed perspective on the participation of LEP students in diverse federal programs.

New Initiatives and Projected Impact

Voluntary National Assessments: New voluntary national assessments in reading and math will help to set high academic standards for all students and measure how well they meet these standards. The National Assessment Governing Board is developing the voluntary national test. At the same time, the National Academy of Sciences is studying issues related to the quality of test items and their use, making recommendations for practices and safeguards in the use of test results, and determining if an equivalency scale can be developed to link commercially available standardized tests and state assessments to the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

> **Direct Impact:** Communities and parents will have information that tells them how well their children are performing in relation to a national standard. Access to this information will support parents' taking a more active role in reviewing the effectiveness of their schools in educating Hispanic and LEP students.

INCORPORATING THE FIVE GOALS THROUGH OUTREACH

As the current improvement efforts, partnerships and new initiatives described above clearly indicate, the Department's intent is to be more responsive and committed to an urgent goal: improving the quality of education for all Hispanic and LEP students so that they may get a solid foundation in elementary and secondary school and have access to college and learning for a lifetime. An additional, key component of the Department's strategies is to integrate the five goals through an ambitious program of outreach and collaboration. To extend the impact of the administration's initiatives, the Department seeks partnerships that will expand their effectiveness and the number of students reached. Community groups, businesses and professional organizations must also develop sustained key roles in communities to ensure that Hispanic and LEP students meet the highest academic standards and increase their engagement in school. The Department has instituted the following outreach activities:

La Opinión: The Department document, *Getting Ready for College Early*, is available in Spanish and English. About 200,000 copies of this document were distributed by *La Opinión*, the largest Spanish newspaper in the United States. *La Opinión* will also make the document available on computer disk to other newspapers as well as on its Web site.

Scholastic, Inc.: In partnership with the Department, Scholastic, Inc. created and disseminated 50,000 posters conveying the message "Reading is Power/Leer es Poder" to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month for 1997. The poster includes reading activities in English and Spanish that teachers and parents can reproduce for use in the classroom and at home, as well as a letter from the secretary of education and the president of Scholastic Inc. emphasizing the importance of reading.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC): LULAC, the nation's largest constituency-based organization of Hispanics, has committed to prepare its 110,000 members to tutor Hispanic students through the Department of Education's America Reads Challenge.

Univision: Univision, the country's largest Spanish-language television network, is partnering with the Department in several cities with large Hispanic populations to develop television spots and other types of televised programming that deliver to homes messages supporting education.

Toll-Free Number and Spanish Materials: The Department of Education is developing criteria to systematically determine which of its publications should be translated so that Spanish-speaking parents have better access to information about education. In addition, the Department will establish a toll-free number that is answered in Spanish to ensure that there are no barriers to Hispanic parents who want to find out how to better help their children succeed in school.

Inter-Departmental Council for Hispanic Educational Improvement: The White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans will launch this new effort this

spring. Senior-level representatives from all departments will participate in the council and in working groups on early childhood, K-12, undergraduate and graduate education, and on community and federal employment to pursue aggressive programs to improve educational opportunities for the nation's Latino community.

Council of Great City Schools: The Department is collaborating with the Council of Great City Schools, which represents the nation's 50 largest city school districts, to promote high standards through the voluntary national assessments. As a result of the partnership, 15 major urban school districts, all with significant populations of Hispanic or LEP students, have committed to participate in the national assessments. Additionally, the Department is working with the Council to provide technical assistance to these districts in reaching high standards and increasing the likelihood that students will perform well on the national tests.

Coordinating Committee on LEP Research: The Department is creating an external committee to coordinate research on LEP students. The external committee, composed of researchers who bring expertise and interest to the problem of educating Hispanic and LEP populations, will assist the Department to focus its efforts on critical Hispanic and LEP education policy issues. An internal committee will aid the principal offices currently conducting research—or planning such research— on Hispanic and LEP issues to better integrate research efforts.

Corporation for National Service: In partnership with the Department, the Corporation is engaging volunteer tutors in literacy efforts in hundreds of communities nationwide. Increasing numbers of Hispanics serve in the AmeriCorps national service.

Conferences on LEP Assessment: The Department is hosting periodic conferences on the most pressing research issues affecting the development of assessments for LEP students. These conferences, which convene representatives from the research community, state education agencies, school districts, and advocacy organizations, focus on improved coordination and planning of research.

Clearinghouse on Successful Models for Dropout Prevention: The Department of Education, through its various research centers and other clearinghouses, has a great deal of resources relating to dropout prevention. This would provide school and community leaders with one-stop shopping for ideas and information on best practices for keeping kids in school.

CONCLUSION

Clearly, significant problems present obstacles to educating Hispanic and LEP students. At times these obstacles may seem insurmountable to the individuals, schools and organizations that grapple with them daily. The Department's response is meant to provide a sustained and national focus on these problems, tackling the obstacles with multifaceted, proactive, and aggressive strategies aimed at a paramount goal: educating all Hispanic and LEP students so that they meet high standards and prepare for full participation in an increasingly sophisticated job market and society.

In all its programs and initiatives, the Department believes that it must be both responsive and strategic on a variety of levels. A number of key Department-sponsored programs can have direct, positive effects on the education of Hispanic and LEP students and their families, and on adult Hispanic and LEP learners. However, we realize that the continued success of these programs depends upon the degree to which they are improved and refined over time by local leaders, educators and families—and supported throughout the nation by a variety of influential constituencies.

With its new initiatives the Department also acknowledges the need for action on a variety of fronts. This multifaceted plan for action covers a vast and difficult territory. It ranges from equipping the nation's teaching force to deal with increasing numbers of bilingual and LEP students to implementing a relevant program of research that can inform the best practices of the nation's schools. It also includes bold new ways to help families pay for college and needed training.

In all of these initiatives and strategies, the Department seeks the active collaboration of the nation's educators, researchers, families, businesses, and community, state and national organizations as well as the help of individuals. This collaboration and help can bring results through a variety of tutoring and other volunteer activities, making a significant impact on the lives of the nation's students.

Finally, the Department's strategies for outreach supplement its current programs and new initiatives, connecting its five goals in a plan to draw upon the expertise of key community organizations, universities, distinguished researchers, and individuals connected to the Hispanic and LEP communities. With fundamental and necessary programs in place, with new and far-reaching initiatives, and with concerted collaboration and outreach throughout the nation, the Department will support educating all Hispanic and LEP students to high standards. If we, together, work toward this far-reaching, yet realistic, attainable goal for Hispanic and LEP students, they can have a productive future in the world's marketplace.

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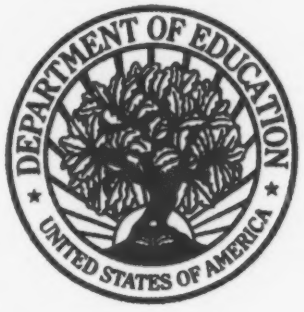
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